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1 April 1952

To: Chief, SR                      SECURITY INFORMATION  
Via: Chief, SR/W  
From: Deputy Chief, SR/W  
Subject: Contact Report on Mikola ABRAMCHIK

1. On 25 February the undersigned and [ ] conferred with the President of the Byelorussian National Council (BNC), who had requested Contacts Branch, [ ] to arrange a meeting with the undersigned.
2. Abramchik was brief and to the point. He asked whether any progress had been made in arranging for a Byelorussian military unit (Guard Company). He stated that the two Byelorussian draftees whom he had mentioned to us before had now been sent overseas, one to Europe and the other to Japan. He also said that two more young Byelorussians had been inducted into the service since he last saw us. The point Abramchik obviously wanted to put across was that while we delayed, good men who might make up a Byelorussian unit were being scattered across the face of the earth. It was explained, as on several previous occasions, that the subject of a Byelorussian unit had been brought up with the Department of Defense, which was now deliberating on the merits of the scheme.
3. Abramchik stated that machinery had been set up for collecting clothing from recent Byelorussian arrivals in this country. He asked us to confirm his understanding that the clothing was to be turned over to [ ] in New York. Confirmation was given to him.
4. Abramchik asked whether we had any information about the date of Ragula's arrival in this country or whether, indeed, he was coming at all. Abramchik said that Ragula had written two weeks ago to say that he still didn't have his visa and so he didn't know when he would be able to get started on his trip to America. We were not able to clarify the matter at that time.
5. Abramchik claims that [ ] told him that in the event of a change in the direction of the Voice of America, we would arrange an interview for Abramchik with whoever might become responsible for the programming of Slavic broadcasts. Abramchik reports that a change in direction has now taken place, and he would like to have a crack at talking the program director into introducing programs in Byelorussian. Abramchik was previously told by the "notoriously Russophile program director" that no broadcasts in Byelorussian were contemplated because all Byelorussians could understand either Russian or Polish. Abramchik

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asserts that this is not the case, and at any rate, a statement of this sort is an affront to Byelorussian national pride. By extension, this policy implies that the Byelorussians, as a cultural and political group, are not worth bothering with.

6. Last but not least, Abramchik mentioned that he would like to receive any money which we intended to give him for Byelorussian activities before he left this country so that on his return to France he could explain to French officials curious about his sources of revenue that the money was collected from Byelorussian DP's in America. He was told that he could use the same story at any time, provided that the money (if authorized) is sent to him from this country through regular commercial or postal channels. He was not very keen about this bit of information and said that it would be better if he got the money before he left.

7. When asked how he felt in general about his experiences in America, Abramchik indicated that he was disheartened. The principal cause for his dissatisfaction appears to be his impression that Russians and Russophiles are in control of the various American programs, official and non-official, which relate to Eastern Europe:

a. The VOA policy of precluding Byelorussian broadcasts is laid to the influence of Russian chauvinists who are well entrenched in the VOA set-up. Official U.S. policy, as it manifests itself through the State Department, is censured for showing preference for Russians over other Eastern Slavs, for naively trusting the fair-mindedness of Russians in positions of authority, and for the failure on the part of native Americans to understand the problems of Eastern Europe.

b. Abramchik related that Byelorussian scholars in New York who applied to the Ford Foundation for a grant from the funds recently set aside for East European studies were told by the Russian element in control of allocations that only those Byelorussians would be considered who agreed to undertake Russian studies. Dalin, who is connected with the Foundation and apparently the father of the Yale professor, told the group with some disdain that the Byelorussian movement was just something 'stirred up by the Germans' and had not existed before 1940. Abramchik sadly points out that the Soviet Russians very well understand how to play the nationalities question to their advantage, in contrast with what holds true here. In the USSR, the Russians are at great pains to translate all their classics into Byelorussian, Ukrainian, etc., as a graceful gesture to the cultural and linguistic integrity of those nationalities.

c. Abramchik states that he attended the meeting held in Washington last Saturday which had as its purpose the investigation of ways and means to conduct political warfare in Eastern Europe. Not only was Abramchik shocked by the irresponsible discussion in public of matters which properly should be discussed only in secret, but he was disgusted by the manner in which the meeting had been rigged by the Russians, who were apparently the main ones to be called in for pre-meeting consultation by the two Congressmen behind the gathering.

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8. Abranchik places Byelorussian immigrants in this country in three categories:

a. The youth, idealistic and ready to fight at the drop of a hat for the liberation of their country.

b. The professional people, who are divided between those who want to return to the homeland when it becomes possible and those who have found their niche in America and want to stay.

c. The farmers who for the most part have established a home here and want to stay.

9. Abranchik did not mention his discussions in New York concerning QKACTIVE matters nor did he ask any operational questions. In conclusion he stated that he expected to depart for France at the end of March.

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